

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----095712 030020Z /61

O 022324Z MAR 78  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 413  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JERUSALEM 0619

EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

FROM ATHERTON

U.S. DEL NO. 50

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV XF US  
SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN -- MARCH 2

1. LEWIS AND I MET PRIVATELY WITH BEGIN AND DAYAN BEFORE LARGER MEETING BEGAN. I TOLD BEGIN THAT I HAD SADAT'S MESSAGE TO HIM; AFTER REFLECTION, SADAT HAD DECIDED TO SEND IT AS A PERSONAL LETTER RATHER THAN AN ORAL MESSAGE. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT AS A RESULT OF OUR EXPLANATIONS TO SADAT OF ISRAELI PERCEPTIONS AND PROBLEMS, THE MESSAGE WAS SOMEWHAT MODERATED WHEN COMPARED WITH THE POINTS SADAT HAD CONVEYED TO ME AT OUR FIRST ISMALIA VISIT. I ALSO TOLD BEGIN THAT SADAT HAD AT FIRST WANTED NO PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE MESSAGE BUT HAD IN THE END CONCLUDED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE THE FACT THAT A MESSAGE HAD BEEN SENT ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY. SADAT HAD, HOWEVER LAID GREAT STRESS ON KEEPING THE CONTENTS OF THE MESSAGE CONFIDENTIAL. I THEN HANDED SADAT'S LETTER TO BEGIN WHO READ IT QUICKLY.

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WHILE HE DID NOT COMMENT OTHER THAN TO SAY HE WOULD BE RESPONDING IN THE NEAR FUTURE, HE HAD A RATHER WRY LOOK ON HIS FACE AS HE READ IT. HE SHOWED A COPY TO DAYAN RIGHT AWAY AND SUBSEQUENTLY PASSED IT BOTH TO YADIN AND WEIZMAN TO READ BEFORE THE LARGER MEETING. WE CAUTIONED BEGIN AND ALL THREE OF THOSE WHO HAD READ IT SEPARATELY ON SADAT'S EXTREME SENSITIVITY TO ANY

REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS. WE MADE CLEAR TO EACH OF THEM THAT SADAT WAS LOOKING ON THIS AS A TEST CASE OF WHETHER HE AND BEGIN COULD RE-ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION IN A CONFIDENTIAL FASHION. BEGIN SAID HE WOULD REPLY IN TIME FOR ME TO DELIVER HIS MESSAGE TO SADAT IN CAIRO NEXT TUESDAY. BOTH YADIN AND WEIZMAN TOLD LEWIS LATER SEPARATELY THAT THEY WERE ACUTELY AWARE OF THE NEED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY IN THIS CASE. YADIN SAID HE WOULD TRY TO PERSUADE BEGIN NOT TO REBUT POINT-BY-POINT SOME OF THE STATEMENTS IN THE SADAT LETTER, BUT BASED ON BEGIN'S PRELIMINARY REACTION WE DO NOT HAVE MUCH CONFIDENCE THAT HE WILL SUCCEED.

2. THE FULL GROUP THEN ASSEMBLED WITH YADIN, DAYAN, WEIZMAN, BARAK AND ASSORTED MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND BEGIN'S OFFICE PRESENT ON THE ISRAELI SIDE, AND AMBASSADOR LEWIS, STERNER, KORN AND SHERMAN PRESENT FOR THE AMERICANS.

3. BEGIN ANNOUNCED TO THE GROUP THAT I HAD BROUGHT A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM SADAT. HE SAID HE WOULD READ THIS CAREFULLY AND OF COURSE IT WOULD BE ANSWERED. ONLY THE FACT OF THE MESSAGE HAVING BEEN SENT AND RECEIVED WOULD BE ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY. AT THE REQUEST OF PRESIDENT SADAT THE CONTENTS WOULD BE KEPT COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL. SUBSEQUENTLY IN THE MEETING BEGIN SAID HE WOULD PREPARE  
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AD DRAFT REPLY WHICH WOULD BE READY EARLY NEXT WEEK AND TRANSMITTED TO ME SO THAT I COULD HAND IT TO SADAT ON MY NEXT VISIT TO CAIRO. HE COMMENTED THAT HE WOULD PREFER ME DO THIS PERSONALLY

4. I TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT I HAD A MEETING EARLIER WITH DAYAN (SEPTTEL) DURING WHICH I HAD GONE OVER IN SOME DETAIL THE DISCUSSIONS WE HAD IN CAIRO ABOUT THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. I THEN BRIEFED THE PRIME MINISTER ABOUT THE ATMOSPHERE OF MY TALKS AND WENT OVER VARIOUS POINTS ABOUT THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WHICH I HAD PREVIOUSLY COVERED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER BUT IN GOOD DEAL MORE ABBREVIATED TERMS. THERE WERE NO COMMENTS OR INTERVENTIONS OF NOTE DURING THIS PRESENTATION. I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH SADAT'S LETTER AND PERHAPS OTHER MATTERS AS WELL. I ALSO TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER, AS I HAD DAYAN EARLIER, OF THE EMOTIONAL EGYPTIAN REACTION TO THE RECENT CABINET DECISION ON SETTLEMENTS AND THAT, ALTHOUGH I HAD TRIED TO EXPLAIN THERE WERE ELEMENTS OF RESTRAINT IN THE ISRAELI DECISION, THE EGYPTIANS HAD NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY CONVINCED AND STILL FELT STRONGLY THAT ANY CONTINUED ACTIVITY

TO EXPAND THE SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES  
WERE INCONSISTENT WITH PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. AGAIN,  
THIS ELICITED NO PARTICULAR RESPONSE ON THE PART OF ANY OF  
THE ASSEMBLED ISRAELIS.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 JERUSALEM 0619

EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

5. AT THE END OF MY PRESENTATION THE PRIME MINISTER  
THANKED ME FOR OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO CLOSE THE  
GAP ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND SAID THAT HE  
WAS AT LEAST GRATIFIED THAT THE LATEST ISRAELI DRAFT  
HAD NOT BEEN REJECTED OUT OF HAND IN CAIRO. HE SAID  
THERE WAS CLEARLY ROOM FOR FURTHER THINKING ABOUT THE  
DRAFT, THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE AGREED THAT  
ISRAEL WOULD NOT ATTEMPT DURING THIS STOP TO PRODUCE  
ANOTHER DRAFT. THEY WOULD AWAIT THE EGYPTIAN COUNTER-  
PROPOSAL. BEGIN ASKED WHETHER PRESIDENT CARTER HAD BEEN  
KEPT INFORMED OF THE PROGRESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE  
DECLARATION AND I INFORMED HIM THAT WE HAD BEEN  
REPORTING FULLY.

6. YADIN ASKED WHETHER THE PRESIDENT HAD TALKED AT  
ALL ABOUT THE RECENT INCIDENT ON CYPRUS OR OTHER FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS PROBLEMS THAT EGYPT WAS FACING AT THE MOMENT.  
I TOLD HIM THAT SADAT HAD NOT MENTIONED THIS, BUT  
THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD IN THE CONTEXT OF  
THE INCREASING CRITICISM EGYPT WAS RECEIVING FROM  
OTHER ARAB STATES AT THE PRESENT TIME. I HAD CITED  
THIS TO UNDERSCORE EGYPT'S DESIRE TO GET ON WITH THE  
NEGOTIATIONS EXPEDITIOUSLY AND TO REACH AGREEMENT ON  
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A DECLARATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

7. THE PRIME MINISTER ASKED WHETHER HIS UNDERSTANDING  
WAS CORRECT THAT THE EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE ABOUT THE  
TWO COMMITTEES RECONVENING HAD BEEN LEFT OPEN.  
I REPLIED THAT THIS WAS CORRECT. SADAT HAD NOT  
DEFINED IN SPECIFIC TERMS THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE  
COMMITTEES MIGHT RESUME WORK. FOREIGN MINISTER  
KAMEL HAD BEEN MORE EXPLICIT IN STATING HIS VIEW THAT  
AGREEMENT HAD TO BE REACHED ON THE DECLARATION OF  
PRINCIPLES BEFORE THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE COULD RECONVENE.  
NEWLIN

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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